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E.O. 12065:GDS1/9/85 (CWRUSER)

TAGS: SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: REPRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF MOTHERS OF THE
PLAZA AND JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES.

REF: BA 0148

1. DEPARTMENT FULLY APPRECIATES DELICATE INTERNAL
POLITICAL BALANCE WHICH EXISTS IN ARGENTINA BECAUSE OF
BEAGLE CHANNEL CONFRONTATION WITH CHILE, BUT BELIEVES
THAT WE MUST EXPRESS OUR CONCERN TO THE SENIOR LEVELS
OF GOA OVER THE RECENT ACTIONS AGAINST THE MOTHERS OF
THE PLAZA AND THE CONTINUING HARASSMENT OF THE JEHOVAH'S
WITNESSES. AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE YOU SHOULD
SEEK INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL VIOLA DRAWING ON THE

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FOLLOWING POINTS:

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (\$200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS
Margaret P. Griefeld, Director
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny
Exemption(s):
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full
☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to
Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

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-- AS THE GENERAL KNOWS, WE ARE INTERESTED IN PURSUING NORMAL FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, AND UNDERSTAND THAT ARGENTINA IS PASSING THROUGH A DIFFICULT PERIOD IN ITS HISTORY.

-- WE WISH TO BRING THESE CONCERNS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ARGENTINE LEADERSHIP IN A SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP.

WE ARE

-- DISTRESSED TO HEAR OF THE GOA'S DECISION NOT TO ALLOW THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA TO MEET ON THURSDAY JANUARY 4. WE HOPE THAT THE MOTHERS WILL AGAIN BE ALLOWED TO JOIN TOGETHER TO REQUEST INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR MISSING CHILDREN.

-- EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE HOPE THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT WILL RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE MOTHER'S INQUIRIES ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN'S FATE. WE HOPE THE GOVERNMENT WILL DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO ATTEMPT TO GIVE AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE TO THE MOTHERS. IN OUR VIEW, LASTING TRANQUILITY WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE IN ARGENTINA UNTIL AN ANSWER IS GIVEN TO THESE QUESTIONS.

-- THE UNITED STATES IS ALSO DEEPLY CONCERNED BY THE CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES.

-- WE UNDERSTAND THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS WHICH REQUIRE ARGENTINE CITIZENS TO ACCEPT MILITARY SERVICE AND TO HONOR THE NATIONAL SYMBOLS.

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-- AS IN ARGENTINA TODAY, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IN THE 1940'S TOOK A NUMBER OF ACTIONS AGAINST THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES BECAUSE THEY REFUSED MILITARY SERVICE AND REFUSED TO SALUTE THE FLAG AND SING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM. AS THE GENERAL KNOWS, WE HAVE SINCE CHANGED OUR VIEWS AND ALLOWED COMPLETE FREEDOM TO THE WITNESSES BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT RELIGIOUS GROUPS CAN BE GRANTED THE RIGHT TO PRACTICE THEIR CREED, EVEN WHEN THESE ARE CONTRARY TO THAT OF THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY.

-- THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE JEHOVAH'S

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WITNESSES HAVE CAUSED A WIDESPREAD LETTERWRITING CAMPAIGN IN THE UNITED STATES PROTESTING THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT ACTIONS. THIS UNFORTUNATELY CREATES A VERY NEGATIVE PICTURE OF ARGENTINA AND MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR US TO WORK TOWARD A NORMALIZATION OF OUR RELATIONS.

-- WE ARE BRINGING THESE POINTS TO HIS ATTENTION.

2. DEPARTMENT IS NOT SANGUINE THAT REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WILL BRING IMMEDIATE RECOGNITION BY THE GOA, BUT THE CONTINUED HARASSMENT OF GROUP MEMBERS DOES REQUIRE US TO SPEAK-UP ON THEIR BEHALF. MOREOVER, THE ARGENTINE EXAMPLE MAY BE SPREADING,

AS IS EVIDENCED BY THE RECENT PARAGUAYAN ACTION AGAINST THE WITNESSES. WE WISH TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO RESTRICT AND, IF POSSIBLE, TO REVERSE THESE NEGATIVE ACTIONS. VANCE

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